



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELEPHANTINE PAPYRI FOR THE HISTORY OF HEBREW RELIGION

---

STANLEY A. COOK, M.A.  
Cambridge, England

---

Repeated discoveries in the lands in which the books of the Bible gradually assumed their present shape have exercised a profound influence upon all departments of biblical study. The work of criticism which had been energetically concentrated upon the sacred writings themselves has, in recent decades, been deepened and widened; and as these discoveries brought ever more abundant stores of material, the criticism has tended to become more historical and psychological. New light has been thrown upon ancient oriental life and thought, and the Bible and its contents are accordingly being viewed against the background of those circumstances and conditions which the external evidence, more objective and often contemporary, has at length revealed. But although many difficulties and obscurities have vanished, fresh ones have arisen in their place, and old problems take a new form. While biblical study is being pursued with the help of all that directly or indirectly elucidates the sources, it is not unjust to say that it is seriously embarrassed, partly by the accumulation of material so immense that no single hand can hope to deal with it, and partly also by the fact that those who interest themselves in the theological, historical, archaeological, or in any other of the departments differ considerably as regards standpoint, aim, and method. Especially is this true in those cases where the different lines of inquiry yield conflicting results. Such a case lies before us, and this article purposes to give some account of what has rightly been regarded as one of the most valuable of recent "finds." Indeed, it has been asserted that the evidence constitutes "a turning-point in the Biblical Criticism of our century."<sup>1</sup> But its precise significance has been disputed; and it is not even agreed whether

<sup>1</sup> J. Halévy, *Revue sémitique*, 1908, p. 240.

it supports the conservative, traditional, or orthodox position, or the position of the "critics"! Our purpose, therefore, is to ascertain what the evidence *safely* allows us to infer.

The evidence in question consists of Aramaic papyri from the island of Elephantine in Upper Egypt. The island faces Syene (Assuan), familiar to the Hebrews as the southern frontier-city of Egypt, the phrase "from Migdol to Syene" meaning for Egypt what "from Dan to Beersheba" meant for the Hebrew (see Ezek. 29:10; 30:6, R.V. marg.). Egyptian-Aramaic papyri had long been known, and Clermont-Ganneau, the brilliant French savant, to whom Semitic epigraphy and archaeology owe so much, had already argued that they belong to the period of the Persian domination.<sup>1</sup> His view was confirmed by the subsequent discovery of dated papyri of the fifth century B.C., as also was his equally brilliant conjecture that "the fortress of Yeb," to which they repeatedly refer, was no other than Elephantine itself. The material at our disposal now consists of a number of earlier known inscriptions and papyri from various parts of Egypt, and two collections of papyri from Elephantine: one a small series of papyri acquired by Mr. Robert Mond and edited by Professor Sayce and Dr. A. E. Cowley, of Oxford (1906), the other, a large quantity unearthed in the course of excavation by the Berlin Imperial Museum, and edited by Professor Sachau of Berlin (1911).<sup>2</sup> As usual, chance played a great part in these discoveries; and Professor Sayce, who has always been both zealous and fortunate in the recovery of ancient "finds," tells of the quantities of papyri and ostraka which native workmen had carelessly lost or destroyed. As for those that survive, they have given birth to a very large literature, and it goes without saying that every writer, like the present, is greatly indebted to all whose labors have assisted in the editing, correcting, and elucidating of the texts.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Rev. arch.*, 1878, pp. 95-107; 1879, pp. 21-39.

<sup>2</sup> For the excavations, conducted on the site of the old Jewish houses, see *Zeit. f. aegyptische Sprache*, 1910, pp. 14-61.

<sup>3</sup> The main works are A. H. Sayce and A. E. Cowley, *Aramaic Papyri* (London, 1906); E. Sachau, *Aramäische Papyrus und Ostraka* (Berlin, 1911); a hand-edition of the latter by A. Ungnad, *Aram. Pap. aus Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1911); W. Staerk in

The Elephantine papyri are written in Aramaic, the *lingua franca* of the Persian period from Asia Minor to Arabia and Upper Egypt. In vocabulary, phraseology, and style, the dialect closely resembles that of the Aramaic portions of Ezra and Daniel. It is, however, an older type of dialect; and the view that it is, philologically speaking, earlier than biblical Aramaic has been strongly supported and is not seriously affected by the arguments brought against it.<sup>1</sup>

The papyri afford fresh proof of the distribution of Aramaic, its flexibility, and its daily use among various classes of Semitic and non-Semitic peoples. Moreover, it is not out of place to recall the fact that Aramaic was now establishing itself in Palestine, and that its script—and not the old Hebrew or Phoenician alphabet (which was preserved by the Samaritans)—became the parent of the later Jewish and now familiar “square” character. In these papyri the Aramaic character closely resembles that in which the MSS of the Old Testament would be written during the Persian and Hellenistic periods; and not their least value is the picture they give us of the style and writing current among the Jews of the fifth century B.C.

For these papyri actually proceed from a colony of Jews, the date of whose inauguration is not known with certainty (see p. 374). They belong to a military colony at Elephantine, which was closely connected with Syene, the seat of the Persian organization. Much light is thrown upon the political and military régime, and upon the business, social, and religious life. The men are called Jews or Aramaeans; but the language is Aramaean with some Hebraisms,

Lietzmann's *Kleine Texte* (Bonn), viz., Nos. 22 and 23, text (with notes) of the Sayce-Cowley Series; No. 32, three of Sachau's papyri with Old Testament illustrative passages; and No. 94, annotated translation of a considerable number of both collections. Of other literature especially to be named are N. Peters, *Jüdische Gemeinde*, etc. (1910); Ed. Meyer, in *Sitz.-ber.* of Berlin University, 1911, pp. 1026 ff., and his *Papyrusfund von Elephantine* (Leipzig, 1912); the reviews by Nöldeke, *Zeit. f. Assyriol.*, 1907, pp. 130–49; *Literar. Zentralblatt*, 1911, cols. 1503 ff.; Lidzbarski, *Ephemeris für semit. Epigraphik*, III, 69–84, 238–60; and Lagrange, *Revue biblique*, 1908, pp. 325–49; 1912, pp. 127–37, 575–87. See further the bibliographies in Staerk.

<sup>1</sup> See Nöldeke, *Ency. Brit.* (11th ed.), XXIV, 624; C. C. Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, pp. 161 ff.; Driver, *Lit. of O.T.*, pp. 504, 515, and Addenda, pp. xxxiv ff.

and the names are characteristically "biblical," including such familiar forms as Hoshea, Haggai, Menahem, Zadok, and Zephaniah. We hear of the family relations, the material prosperity, and, in particular, of the cosmopolitanism of the day. The people it is true, worship Yāhō or Yāhū—here, and throughout, the correct vocalization of the purely consonantal texts is often quite conjectural—and this *Y-h-w* can be no other than *Y-h-w-h*, Yahweh, the name better known to us in the inaccurate and hybrid form "Jehovah." Yahu had a temple of considerable extent, with its priests, sacrifices, and regular offerings. It dated back to before the time of Cambyses, whose special protection it claims to have enjoyed. But not only do the Jews appear to be under the patronage of Persia, not only do they live in the midst of Egyptians, Persians, and perhaps Babylonians, but there is at least one case of intermarriage with a foreigner—an Egyptian. Besides this, the free use of non-Jewish names also suggests a certain laxity. Elephantine itself was the seat of the worship of Khnum, later Khnub (Chnubis), the deity of the Cataract district, a god of fertility, who was symbolized by the ram. To this add that a mixed military community would foster a comparison of religious ideas, and lead equally to tolerance and to rivalry.<sup>1</sup> Life in Elephantine afforded the opportunity for intermingling of cults, and the papyri reveal the astonishing fact that, although the Jews appear fervent and genuine worshipers of Yahu, so far from practicing the strict monotheism which is characteristic of Jewish prophetism and legalism, they even admit two other deities by the side of Yahu, and thus afford a striking example of that freedom and laxity against which the more spiritual minds in Israel had to protest.

In addition to the significance of the papyri for the religion of Israel, attention has been attracted by the fragments of an ancient and much-traveled romance, the story of Ahikar. Ahikar is the Achiacharus who is referred to briefly, as a well-known character, in the "apocryphal" Book of Tobit (2:21 f.; 14:10). The hero also finds a place both in the fables of Aesop and in the *Thousand*

<sup>1</sup> On the wall of a private house near the temple of Khnum was found scratched τὸ προσκύνημα τ[ῷ]ν ἀλλοφύλων—apparently the testimony of some foreign soldiers (at a later date) to the Egyptian god (*Zeit. f. aeg. Spr.*, 1910, p. 25).

*and One Nights.* Quite as noteworthy was the discovery of portions of the Aramaic version of the great inscription of Darius I, set up by the king in Old Persian, Susian, and Babylonian, to celebrate the victories which brought him to the throne. It is, perhaps, with mixed feelings that we greet these fragments which come to light after the patient toil and years of labor during which the "cuneiform" writing has been made to reveal its secrets: How different it might have been had they come earlier or at the beginning—had they provided a timely clue, as did the Rosetta stone to Egyptology! The difficulty of deciphering the Hittite hieroglyphs today brings home to us the great value of bilinguals. On the other hand, it may be questioned whether oriental studies had advanced sufficiently in 1800–1860 to enable one to interpret the papyri adequately. The Aramaic contains so many foreign words that the translation of the papyri demands all the energies of Assyrian, Egyptian, and Iranian scholars; and it is this mixture—so natural, when we consider the population—which tells against the notion, hastily put forth by one or two writers, that the texts are forgeries! And to the preceding remarks it must be added that although some have lamented that Elephantine has not produced anything so sensational as a biblical text, it is probable that such a discovery would only complicate the present problems, and that the questions raised by the (later) "Nash Papyrus," with its remarkable version of the Decalogue and the Shema<sup>c</sup>, would be trifling as compared with those that Elephantine or some other Egyptian site may some day bring, should there be disclosed biblical texts of the Persian period.

It will be best to present a summary of the more important papyri, arranged as far as possible in their chronological order. This will give a fair and unbiased idea of their general character, and the special questions relating to their significance for Hebrew religion can be handled later.

We begin with S 27, dated the second year of the reign of Xerxes I (485–465 B.C.).<sup>x</sup> Together with the undated but evi-

<sup>x</sup> We refer to the Sayce-Cowley edition (S-C) by the letters (A to L), and to that of Sachau (S)—with which Ungnad's handbook agrees—by the number (and not by the "Papyrus" or the "Tafel"). S 31, apparently of 494 B.C., will be found below under the year 407.

dently contemporary S 29, it refers to the provisioning of the garrison, and is a contract between Hoshea b. (=*bar*, "son of") Hoduyah and Ahiab b. Gemariah, on the one side, and 'Esp . . . (?) b. Hanani, the carpenter, on the other. Hoduyah—it must be remembered that the vocalization is always conjectural—is the name which should doubtless be read in the place of the impossible Hodaviah in Ezra 2:40, etc. (the Septuagint *Odouia* points to the true form). The name will mean "praise Yah," and it should be noticed that very many of the Elephantine names end in *-iah* (-yah), and characteristically resemble those in the post-exilic lists of the Old Testament.

Leaving Elephantine for a moment, we have a funeral inscription, found in 1877 at Memphis. It is dated in the fourth year of Xerxes (*Corpus Inscr. Semit.*, II, 122); and, with a few of rather later date (*CIS*, II, 123, 130, 141 f.), is worth recording as an example of the way in which some Jews, at least, adopted Egyptian cults. The first is a prayer by Abseli for the "accession" of his parents, Abba b. Ḥur and Aḥitobu daughter of 'Adaiah, "before the god Osiris." Another begins "Blessed be Taba, daughter of Tahapi, worshiper of the god Osiris" (No. 141). According to Egyptian belief the deceased went to Osiris, if he did not actually become Osiris himself, and it is much to be regretted that we have no funeral inscription from Elephantine to throw light upon the eschatological ideas of its Jewish inhabitants.

About a decade later, in the fifteenth year of Xerxes, begins the series of archives of the family of Mahseiah (S-C A). Similar collections have been found of demotic papyri at Thebes and el-Hibeh, and at Nippur there were more than seven hundred contract tablets, belonging to the family of Murāshu, bankers and brokers during the reigns of Artaxerxes I and Darius II. Koniah b. Zadok receives from his neighbor, Mahseiah b. Jedoniah, both described as Aramaeans of Syene, a portion of his gateway which he uses for a building, the nature of which is obscure. It is carefully described by reference to "the street that runs between us and the house of the sailor Peft'onit." The scribe is Pelatiah b. Ahio, and the witnesses are Mahseiah b. Isaiah, Satibarzanes b. 'Athar-ili, Shemaiah b. Hoshea, Phrataphernes b. Artaphernes, Bagdates b.

Nabu-kudurri, Nabuli b. Darga, Ben-tirash b. Rahamre<sup>c</sup>, and Shallum b. Hoshiaah. The names—Hebrew, Babylonian, Persian, and perhaps Egyptian—vividly illustrate the mixed character of the civilization.

Six years later, the accession-year of Artaxerxes I (465–425), Mahseiah had to defend himself at court before Damidata and his “colleagues” (*kēnāwāthā*; cf. Ezra 5:6, etc.), against another neighbor, Dargman, a Persian from Khorasmia. He succeeded, and Dargman formally relinquishes his claim, and explicitly describes the piece of land which had been in dispute. Its boundaries are fully stated, but by a curious blunder the scribe has confusedly transposed the cardinal points (see further below, on D, E, and J). In this “deed of conveyance” we read that Mahseiah, who is here called a Jew, justified his statements by a solemn oath “by Yahu, the god, in the fortress Yeb,” and that the Persian accepted the oath as conclusive (S-C B).

To the king’s fourth year belongs a rather remarkable document of a dispute between Malchiah b. Joshibiah, an Aramaean, a property-owner in Yeb, and another—the papyrus is mutilated (S 28). One of them is accused of entering the other’s house, beating his wife, and carrying off the goods, and the accused is required to purge himself by a solemn oath. Unfortunately, however, owing to the state of the document, it is not certain whether Malchiah states the charge of which the unknown one is to clear himself, or whether he himself is accused, and is explicitly denying that he is guilty of the offenses as stated.<sup>1</sup> Clearance-oaths, whereby a man formally testifies his innocence under particular solemn circumstances, are familiar both in Israelite and Babylonian law; and in modern times an oath will be taken before the sacred tomb of a saint, or *weli*.<sup>2</sup> What is remarkable here is the special appeal by “the god Herem-bethel.” It recalls the undated text S 33, a dispute between Menahem b. Shallum and Meshullam

<sup>1</sup> For the former see Sachau, Ungnad, Lagrange, and for the latter, Meyer, Staerk, Lévi (*Rev. d’Ét. Juives*, LXIII, 161–84), and Lidzbarski. See also Lagrange, *Rev. bibl.*, 1912, pp. 135 f., 585.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. S. A. Cook, *Laws of Moses and Code of Hammurabi* (1903), pp. 58–65, and especially pp. 62, 227. P. Volz well compares the “oath of clearance” in Job, chap. 31 (see his edition in *Schriften d. A.T.*, pp. 73 f., and cf. *ZATW*, XXXII, 126 f.).

b. Nathan, touching the possession of an ass. There is a reference to swearing by "H . . . (Herem?) by the shrine (*masgēdā*) and by 'Anath-yahu.' Here, at all events, is evidence for usages which are scarcely in accord with the oath by the god Yahu, and it will be convenient to leave the discussion until we have summarized all the evidence.

Two years later Mahseiah's daughter, Mibtahyah was married to her neighbor Jezaniah b. Uriah. In one document (S-C D) her father hands over to her the house which had been the subject of his dispute with Dargman. North and south of it lie the houses of Dargman and of Koniah, respectively; to its west is the house of 'Espemet (the son of the Egyptian sailor in A); while to the east lie the houses of the bridegroom Jezaniah and Zechariah b. Nathan. At the same time Mahseiah gives her Dargman's deed of conveyance, and binds himself not to seek to recover the property. The last measure is illustrated by the undated S 36 where one of the parents undertakes *not* to say: "the goods and the money set forth in this writing I have given you [viz., the daughter and her husband?] out of love; now I wish to take them away." Again, in S 32 property is secured to Abiyahu the wife of Shelomim. It is interesting to observe that women could possess property, and that it was perhaps very necessary to secure their rights by a deed. At all events, Mahseiah hands a document to his son-in-law, Jezaniah (S-C C), permitting him to use the land, to build on it, but not to dispose of it. Care is taken to provide in case of a divorce, whether initiated by the man or—what is more instructive—by the woman: the position of women is especially noteworthy.<sup>1</sup> The undated fragment S 39, where the son-in-law makes some contract with his father-in-law touching the bride, is unintelligible.

Passing over a fragment of the seventh year of Artaxerxes,<sup>2</sup> we come to S 30, a perfect document, dated two years later. Here Jehohan, daughter of Mushlak (or the like), acknowledges her debt of 4 shekels to Meshullam b. Zakkur. The scribe is Nathan b.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Cook, *op. cit.*, pp. 71 ff., 110 f., 145 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Vogüé, *Rep. d'Épig. sém.*, I, 333 ff., No. 438; Lidzbarski, *Ephem.*, II, 221. It has a perplexing reference to a god whose name ends in -*ti*; it cannot (on epigraphical grounds) be Anaiti(s), and the Egyptian Sati is female.

<sup>c</sup>Anani, probably the son of <sup>c</sup>Ananiah who is a witness in C and D (above); he is employed several years later as a scribe (see E and G below), and he seems to have had a son, Mauziah, who was in the same profession (H and J). The document is an excellent example of the usual procedure, and can be illustrated by the undated S-C L where we meet the scribe Gemariah b. Ahio (the name of a witness in B), and the witness Mahseiah b. Jedoniah, presumably the familiar gentleman of that name. In the nineteenth year of Artaxerxes we find Mahseiah conveying to Miphtahyah (*sic*) a house bought from Meshullam b. Zakkur b. Ater, the Aramaean of Syene (S-C E; cf. the creditor in S 30). As usual he hands her Meshullam's own deed and renounces all claim to the property. The description of the boundaries is most interesting. North and south of the house lie the house of Ya'ir and the temple of the god Yahu (here *Y-h-h*); east is the house of Gadol b. Oshea and the street (*shūkā*) between, and to the west is the — [? property] of Marduk (?) b. Palto, "priest" of the gods [Khnujm [and Sa]ti]. The papyrus has several gaps, inaccuracies, and obscurities; but it is clear that there was a temple—the word corresponds to the Babylonian *ekurru*—and that it lay hard by the Jewish colony. But it is also evident that in immediate proximity there was a "heathen" priest of the famous god of Elephantine and apparently one of his female associates.<sup>1</sup>

Six years later Mibtahyah is breaking off relations with Pi<sup>b</sup> b. Pahī of Syene, a builder (S-CF).<sup>2</sup> They divide money, grain, clothing, bronze, and iron—all the goods and chattels—and he gives her a "deed of quittance." But in l. 4 he undertakes to give her what we may call "a deed of wifehood" (cf. S 37,

<sup>1</sup> The word for "temple" (אֲגָדָה) was used later of a heathen altar; the word for "heathen-priest" (מִכְבֵּר; cf. the use of the Heb. plural *kēmārim*), too, was primarily without any obnoxious suggestion. It may be conjectured that the former was originally used in Ezra 5:3. Torrey (*Ezra Studies*, pp. 175 f.) has already observed that both the old Greek and Theodotion presuppose אֲגָדָה (rendering "roof" and "outlay" respectively), and it is an easy step to the assumption that the term, because of its later heathenish associations, was replaced by the rather colorless *uššarnā*; see my note on I Esd. 6:4 (Charles's edition of the *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha*).

<sup>2</sup> The word for "builder" (*ardēkil*) is of Babylonian origin (*arad ekalli*, "temple servant"); and in later Talm. usage denotes an architect or rather a master-builder who had heavy responsibilities. See also S-C G and H.

ll. 4 f.), such as might be expected between a husband and wife; and the question has therefore arisen whether this is not really a deed of divorce.<sup>1</sup> Other interesting features are (*a*) the fact that the scribe and four witnesses have non-Jewish names—compounds of Nebo are especially marked; and (*b*) the woman takes an oath (evidently to express her satisfaction with the division) by the goddess Sati. The latter illustrates one of the results of intercourse with foreigners, and recalls the later injunction to avoid associating with a non-Jew lest one should have to swear by his god (*Talmud, Sanhedrin*, 63b).

Had Mibṭahyah married a second time and separated? Only two months later—but the number of the year is lost!—the lady marries another Egyptian “builder,” As-ḥor, son of Ṣaha<sup>2</sup> (S-C G). He comes to her father’s house—apparently the widow or divorcée cannot dispose of herself—and pays a modest sum of five shekels as “bride-price” (cf. the *mōhar*, Exod. 22:16). There is a long list of his gifts to the bride, and a short one of her gifts to him. Provision is made in case of her dying childless, or of a divorce whether initiated by either. Most noteworthy is the fact that the declaration of divorce “I detest [lit. “hate,” as in Deut. 21:15] so-and-so” would be made in the “congregation”; the Hebrew term ‘ēdāh is employed.

Passing over a mere fragment of the twenty-ninth year of Artaxerxes,<sup>2</sup> we have the remains of an official document of eight years later-(S 5). It is addressed to our lord Arsham, who is perhaps the satrap appointed by Megabyzos. It proceeds from Ah-m-n-s (some Achaemenes, hardly of course the famous prince of that name), together with his “colleagues” and the “scribes of the province.” It has the usual pious salutation: “God greet our lord,” and is especially interesting for words and phrases familiar in biblical Aramaic. Coming now to the fourth year of Darius II (424–404), we meet the two sons of As-ḥor by Mibṭahyah (S-C H). They are named Jedoniah and Maḥseiah after their maternal great-grandfather and grandfather. It is to be observed that (*a*) the names are given or influenced by the mother, and (*b*) the text

<sup>1</sup> See Fischer, *Orient. Lit. Zeit.*, 1913, cols. 306 f.; Epstein, *ZATW*, 1913, p. 235.

<sup>2</sup> Clermont-Ganneau, *Recueil d’Arch. orient.*, VI, 255 ff.; Lidz., *Eph.*, II, 220.

illustrates the well-known custom of naming a child after a grand-parent (or ancestor).<sup>1</sup> The custom in question is not habitual; it seems to occur only on certain levels and at certain periods, and the influence of the mother is likewise a feature neither ubiquitous nor constant. The evidence, therefore, is interesting and suggestive, but we cannot base any sweeping generalizations upon it. In this document the boys are sued by Menahem and Ananiah, sons of Meshullam b. Shelomim b. Azariah, for an assortment of goods and utensils (wool, linen, bronze, iron, wood, palm-leaf [?], corn, etc.), which their grandfather had deposited with As-hor. Compare the list in S-C F where, again, a "builder" is concerned. The case is tried before Widarnag, the commander of the army, who was destined, later, to become more famous, or rather infamous.

S 19, of the fifth year, presumably of Darius, is one of the sensations of the collection. It is a great list of "the names of the Jewish army that gave money to Yahu, the god, each man two shekels." Jedoniah b. Gemariah is treasurer. The list is dated the third of Phamenoth, the seventh Egyptian month, and the offerings are doubtless for the temple.<sup>2</sup> The names include thirty-six women, but the list is incomplete, and we miss several well-known names. Besides, although the list enumerates 115 (i.e., 230 shekels), the total sum is given as 31 keresh (1 k.=10 shekels) and 8 shekels, i.e., 318 shekels. Of this sum it is said "for Yahu, 12 keresh, 6 shekels; for <sup>2</sup>Asm-bethel, 7 keresh; and for <sup>1</sup>Anath-bethel, 12 keresh in silver." Yahu stands at the head, and on the only natural interpretation he has associated with him here these two subordinate deities, otherwise unknown, but whose names are composed of familiar elements.

Leaving all discussion for the present, we pass to S 6, an exceedingly interesting papyrus clearly dated in the fifth year of Darius. It is addressed to "Jedoniah and his colleagues, the Jewish army"

<sup>1</sup> See G. B. Gray (*Festschrift* to Wellhausen, ed. by Marti, 1914, pp. 163-76), who finds other examples of the practice in these papyri; cf. also his *Hebrew Proper Names* (1896), pp. 2 ff. It is important to notice that, according to Gray (*op. cit.*, p. 164), "The custom first appears, or perchance after a break of unknown duration reappears, in certain communities at a relatively late stage."

<sup>2</sup> Epstein, *ZATW*, XIII, 145, has suggested the fifth year of Amyrtaeus, i.e., about 400; similarly W. R. Arnold, *Jour. Bibl. Lit.*, XXXI (1912), 29.

from "your brother Hananiah." Only the left-hand half is preserved. It bids them "count four[teen days . . . .] and from the 15th day to the 21st day of [Nisan . . . . be] pure (?) and take heed no(?) work . . . . do not drink, and aught that is leaven do not . . . . [from] sun-set to the 21st day of Nisa[n] . . . . go (or take?) into your chambers and seal (?), between the days . . . ." This most tantalizing fragment has aroused the liveliest discussion. Is it rightly called the "Passover papyrus"? Or, since there is scarcely room for the specific details, does it not rather refer to the Feast of Unleavened Bread? Certainly there is some obscure allusion to the Passover in S 77, No. 2; but an ostrakon published by Sayce, which seemed to be an important contribution to the subject, is, according to Arnold, a harmless letter in which a rather illiterate husband, writing to his wife, desires, among other things, to know how the baby is!<sup>1</sup> Other questions are raised by the reference to the prohibition of some sort of drink.<sup>2</sup> Again, it is asked, Does the papyrus refer to the introduction of a previously unknown festival? Is the festival now introduced by the command, or by the permission of the great Persian king? If it is not a royal edict that is sent, it may be, that, as Arnold suggests, it is Hananiah who says of himself (l. 3): "This year, the fifth year of Darius the king, being sent from the king to Arsham [I, etc.]"; cf. the otherwise ambiguous "sent" in Ezra 7:14 (Aramaic sent).

The views of well-informed Jewish scholars touching the interpretation of the papyri are worthy of attention.<sup>3</sup> They argue that this papyrus cannot be regarded as proof of the new introduction of any institution; and both Jampel and Daiches point to the custom of a yearly proclamation of the arrival of the festival. Daiches observes that the names of the king and of the governor (viz., Arsham) are mentioned because all official announcements had to be made in the name of the king, and he compares the summary allusion in Neh. 8:14 ff. to the chief laws of the Feast of

<sup>1</sup> Sayce, *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, XXXIII, 183 f.; XXXIV, 17, 212; W. R. Arnold, *Jour. Bibl. Lit.*, XXXI (1912), 13, note.

<sup>2</sup> See Strack, *ZDMG*, LXV (1911), 829; G. Beer, *ZATW*, XXXI (1911), 153; Jastrow, *Jour. Amer. Orient. Soc.*, XXXIII (1913), 180-92.

<sup>3</sup> See I. Lévi, *Rev. d'Ét. Juives*, LXIII, 164; Jampel, *MGWJ* (1911), 660; S. Daiches, *Proc. Soc. Bibl. Arch.*, XXXIV (1912), 22.

Tabernacles when intimation was sent to the Jews "in all their cities and in Jerusalem." At the present day we are told that "shortly before Passover the main laws regarding the leaven and unleavened bread are made known to the congregations in the synagogues by the Rabbis"; and both Daiches and Jampel note several references to the annual proclamation and warning in talmudic times.<sup>1</sup> Certainly it is very important to determine whether Elephantine was usually in communication with Palestine. This provoking fragment scarcely justifies, by itself, the assumption that it deals with the introduction, for the first time, of a new festival. On the other hand, if, as has been suggested, Hananiah is to be identified with the "brother" of Nehemiah (Neh. 1:2; 7:2), it is not impossible that the new reorganization in Jerusalem affected distant Elephantine. But the document is too brief for us to elaborate its implications, and S 8 (below) is a crowning example of Persian thoroughness in matters of business. The allusion in l. 3 ("from the king"), if not merely conventional, proves how powerful were Persian organization and jurisdiction, even in questions of cult; but it is difficult to determine with any safety precisely what change of cult is involved. At all events from this and from other references we are entitled to assume that the Jews of Elephantine now at least keep the usual observances; and there is nothing to show that these conflicted with their conceptions of Yahu, 'Asm-bethel, and 'Anath-bethel.<sup>2</sup>

We go back to the eighth year of Darius to the two grandsons of Mahseiah (S-C J). Their father As-ḥor is here styled Nathan. It is not easy to explain the change during the four years that have elapsed since S-C H. If it is because of his marriage with the Jewess Mibṭahyah, we should expect it to have been made in H;

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Abrahams, too, has drawn my attention to the references in *Rōsh-ha-Shanah* (i. 3) to the regular dispatch of messengers before the chief festivals. Cf. also II Macc. 1:9, 18, where the Jews in Egypt are bidden to observe the Feast of Tabernacles—as though the injunction was a familiar feature.

<sup>2</sup> For other discussions of the text and contents see Strack, *ZDMG*, LXV, 829; Perles, *Or. Lit. Zeit.*, 1911, col. 498; Barth, *ibid.* (1912), col. 10; Schwally, *ibid.*, col. 162; Arnold, *Jour. Bib. Lit.*, XXXI, 1, pp. 1 ff.; Smend, *Theolog. Lit. Zeit.* (1912), p. 485; Lagrange, *Rev. bib.* (1912), pp. 131 f., 578 ff.; Lidzbarski, *Ephem.*, III, 243; Steuernagel, *ZATW* (1911), p. 310, and *ZDPV*, XXXV, 91.

the conjecture that he became a Jew in the intervening years, however tempting, is improbable because the two brothers act, even in H, as though they were orphans. It is conceivable, of course, that individuals,<sup>1</sup> especially in cases of intermarriage, had double names. Here the young Jedoniah and Maḥseiah have succeeded in defending themselves against Jedoniah b. Hoshea b. Uriah, the son of the brother of Jezaniah, the first husband of Mibṭahyah. The case was brought before Widarnag. It concerned a house the location of which should be compared with the details in S-C D. North and south of it are the houses of Hoshea b. Uriah and of a certain son of Zechariah. To the east is the temple of the god Yahu, with the "king's way" running between them (cf. E); and to the west is the house which Maḥseiah gave Mibṭahyah. At first it looks as though the house is that which formed the subject of the dispute between the Persian Dargman and Maḥseiah (S-C B), and was given by the latter to Mibṭahyah when she married Jezaniah (C and D). But this property had Jezaniah's house on its right, and therefore it would seem that the house which Jedoniah claimed was that of his uncle the use of which Mibṭahyah had presumably been enjoying during her life-time.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps she had recently died, and her first husband's nephew was now seeking to recover the property for his own family—and in vain. This conjecture is reinforced by S-C K, six years later, where the two brothers Maḥseiah and Jedoniah divide between them two young slaves of Mibṭahyah, and undertake later on to divide the mother Tebo and a third child Lilū. Evidently other property had already been shared. (The mutilated S 35 may refer to a similar division between two sisters.) The slaves are said to be branded with "to Mibṭahyah," and also with a *yōd*—a very early reference, if the letter *yōd* is intended. The wording is obscure, and perhaps, as Clermont-Ganneau has suggested, the *yōd* is marked upon the arm to the right of the tattooing.<sup>3</sup> Another allusion to branding

<sup>1</sup> On the (later) Palmyrene inscriptions men often have Latin in addition to their native Aramaean names.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. for the rights of widows, Cook, *Laws of Moses*, etc., 141 ff.

<sup>3</sup> *Rev. crit.*, 1906, p. 350, n. 3.

or tattooing upon a slave (a female one) is found in the ostrakon S-C M.<sup>1</sup> The custom is well-known; it was a mark of ownership and was used as a mark of adherence to a deity, sect, or group.

With this we leave the series of family records and go back two years. To the twelfth year of Darius belongs S 8, a very difficult but highly important description of the procedure involved in giving instructions for the repairing or renovating of one of the government ships. The account of the orders as they pass from the lower officials until they reach the great satrap Arsham and are then passed down again is a striking illustration of organization in ancient Egypt perilously approaching "red-tape."<sup>2</sup>

The Jewish colony now enters on its most critical years. Rivalries between the Jews and the priests of Khnum led to a revolt during the absence of Arsham in the fourteenth year of Darius (411-410). The temple was destroyed, and our sources are papyri of three years later giving some account of the loss of the temple and praying that it may be rebuilt. To this period probably belong the undated S 7, 10, and 11. The first seems to be an appeal of a Jewish proprietor to Arsham against unjust treatment at the hands of certain officials. The second is a letter addressed to "my lords Jedoniah, Ma'uziah, Uriah, and the (Jewish) army," apparently from some Jews of the province of Thebes. It seems to point to a time of suspicion, enmity, and intrigue, in which, however, Arsham stands out as a supporter of the Jewish complainants. In S 11 Ma'uziah of Abydos writes to "my lords Jedoniah, Uriah, and the priests of the god Yahu, Mattan b. Joshibiah, and Neriah b. . . ." The interpretation is very uncertain.<sup>3</sup> The writer had been imprisoned by Widarnag on account of a certain precious stone which had been stolen by the traders; he had been released "under the help [literally 'shadow'] of the god of Heaven" by

<sup>1</sup> See for the interpretation, Epstein, *ZATW* (1912), p. 133; Seidel, *ibid.*, p. 298; and for the practice see Isa. 44:5, with the commentaries; *Ency. Bibl.*, art. "Cuttings of the Flesh"; cf. also *Laws of Moses*, etc., pp. 159 f.

<sup>2</sup> See Meyer, *Sitz.-ber.*, Berlin (1911), pp. 1035 ff.; Perles, *Or. Lit. Zeit.* (1911), cols. 498 f.; Büchler, *ibid.*, 1912, cols. 126 f.; Torczyner, *ibid.*, cols. 397 f.; Epstein, *ZATW* (1912), p. 129; (1913), pp. 140 ff., 310.

<sup>3</sup> See especially W. R. Arnold, *op. cit.*, pp. 19 ff.; and cf. Lagrange, *Rev. bibl.* (1912), pp. 583 f.; Staerk (Lietzmann's *Kleine Texte*, No. 94), pp. 17 f.

Seḥa and Hor, two servants of 'Anani; and Ma'uziah commends them to the Jews of Yeb. He points out that from the time that Hananiah came to Egypt until now the situation had been growing worse. One sentence even looks as though Ma'uziah advises his friends to sell out the contents of their houses: whether we lose or whether we do not lose, it is all one, and even if we lose we shall gain credit in the house of 'Anani! The interpretation is too hazardous to build upon, but we should notice that 'Anani is evidently a prominent individual, and that Hananiah's arrival (see S 6, above) seems to make a change in the conditions.

Although S-C K, dated in the month Shebat, of the fourteenth year is unaware of trouble, five months later, in Tammuz, when Arsham was called away to the king, the "heathen priests" of Khnum conspired with Widarnag to do away with the temple of Yahu. "This accursed Widarnag"—as he is frankly called—wrote to his son Nephayan to destroy the temple; and this was done with thoroughness. His men broke the pillars of stone and the five great gates, their doors, hinges, the cedar-work roofing—indeed the whole was burned with fire, and the vessels of gold and silver carried off. This temple dated back to the days of the kings of Egypt, i.e., before the Persian Empire; it was especially spared by Cambyses when he came to Egypt, although the temples of the gods of Egypt were destroyed. The writers proudly recall these facts. But now for three years the unhappy Jews besought "Yahu, the Lord of Heaven," fasting and praying. The "hound" Widarnag met with some obscure punishment, he lost all his wealth, and all those who had harmed the temple were slain. A letter had been sent to Bagohi, the governor of Judah, to Jehohanan the high priest, and his associates, the priests in Jerusalem, and to 'Ustan the brother of 'Anani, and the Judaean nobles. No reply was received. Another letter of the twentieth Marheshwan, in the seventeenth year of Darius (408-407) is our authority for the preceding information (S 1 and 2).<sup>1</sup> It tells Bagohi that throughout these three years they have been fasting and wearing sackcloth, their wives treated as widows; they have not anointed themselves

<sup>1</sup> Of this unique letter we have actually two copies, each with errors, and slightly varying from the other.

with oil, nor have they touched wine; no meal-offering (*minḥah*), frankincense (*lēbōnah*), or burnt-offering (*‘alawah*, [sic?]) has been brought. And so “thy servants Jedoniah and his associates, and the Jews, all the citizens [*baalim*; cf. Judg. 9:2] of Yeb,” unite in their prayer that the governor may send a letter directing that the temple of Yahu be built up again as it was before. Hitherto this had not been permitted. Let it now be done, and then the meal, incense, and burnt-offerings will be brought to the altar in his name, and they, their wives, their sons, and all the Jews that are there will always pray for him. If this temple be rebuilt it will be for him a cause of merit (*sēdākāh*) before Yahu (cf. Deut. 24:13), even more than if one were to offer burnt-offering and sacrificial offerings of a thousand talents! Finally, the writers state that they have sent and made known all these things in a letter to Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat, governor of Samaria; and it is added, parenthetically as it were, that Arsham was ignorant of all that had been done against them (i.e., he was not to blame).

The crisis is illustrated by some fragments of papyri of independent origin acquired by the University of Strassburg in 1898 and first edited by Euting in 1903.<sup>1</sup> These show that the priests of Khnum bribed Widarnag with money and goods, destroyed some part of the fortress, and stopped up the well upon which the garrison depended. Arsham is asked to verify this for himself through the judges and other officials of the province. The writers protest that they had not been among the rebels, and thus it would seem that the attack upon the Jews was only part of a revolt against the Persian rule. In this case the loyalty of the Jews is the more significant. Certainly, if the Jews had a claim to favorable treatment, they were not altogether disappointed. S 3 gives the reply of Bagohi and Delaiah. It is worth quoting in full:

Memorandum [*zikrōn*] of what Bagohi and Delaiah said to me, memorandum, viz., It shall be for thee in Egypt to say before Arsham in reference to the sacrificial place [*bēt madbēhā*] of the God of heaven which was built aforetime in the fortress Yeb, before Cambyses, which this accursed Widarnag

<sup>1</sup> Sachau, pp. 26 f.; Ungnad, pp. 8 f.; Lidzbarski, *Ephem.*, II, 210 ff.

destroyed in the fourteenth year of Darius the king, to build it up in its place, as it was of old, and meal-offering and frankincense-offering shall [or may] they bring upon this altar, even as it was being done aforetime.

One cannot fail to be struck by the unconventional character of the document; it is merely a docket, a note, in striking contrast to the elaborate record respecting the ship (S 8). It implies other documents. On the analogy of the decree of Cyrus in Ezra 6:3 f., for example, we might at least have expected specific details; and it may be noticed that some fragments of papyri do actually contain obscure measurements, which, however, do not necessarily have any reference to the temple.<sup>1</sup> But they show that details such as those ascribed to the "memorandum" of Cyrus were familiar.

Next, it was at once noticed that S 3 ignores the burnt-offerings. It could be argued that the papyrus is merely a memorandum and not necessarily complete, or that the "altar" (*madbēḥā*) naturally implies burnt-offerings, without which a temple would be of little avail. But the memorandum does not use the term "temple." Besides, Daiches has pointed out that the Talmud asks whether a burnt-offering in the (later) temple of Onias at Heliopolis was valid.<sup>2</sup> Consequently there may have been a desire to restrict the privileges of the "altar-house" at Yeb. S 4 is relevant but very imperfect (S 4). Five men of Syene, holding property in Yeb, write to "our lord"—presumably Arsham. They are Jedoniah, Ma'uzi b. Nathan (probably the scribe of S-C H and J), Shemaiah b. Haggai, Hoshea b. Yathom, and Hoshea b. Nathon. The following scraps can be made out: "If our lord . . . and the temple of the god Yahu which . . . in the fortress Yeb, as it for[merly] was built?], and sheep [*kn*], oxen, goats, burnt-offering[?] [*mkkw*] are not[?] offered there, but frankincense, meal-offering . . . , and our lord . . . will make . . . he has given [or we will give] to the house of our lord . . . a thous[and] measures of

<sup>1</sup> See S 9 and also the text edited by Vogüé, *Rép. d'épig. sém.*, I, No. 246; and cf. Lidzbarski, *Ephem.*, II, 217.

<sup>2</sup> Talm. B. *Menah.* 109a. See *Zeit. f. Ass.*, XXII, 198n. For the term *bēth madbēḥā* in S 3 cf. II Chron. 7:12, and the Aramaic phrase in Ezra 6:3.

barley. . . . . ” The document seems to refer to a prohibition of animal-offerings, but one is forced to admit that to embark upon conjecture is to explain *obscurum per obscurius*.<sup>1</sup>

The papyri that remain to be noticed are of less conspicuous interest. S 31 is either of the twenty-seventh or of the seventeenth year of Darius; if the former figure is correct, the reference is not to Darius II (424–405), but to the first of the name (521–485). In this case the papyrus will be the oldest extant (494 B.C.). But if we accept the lesser figure, we are in the year 407, and with this later date the writing agrees. Selūah and Yethōmah—who reappear in S 73(3)—are daughters of Koniah, and exchange property with Yehah’ōr (“Yahu is light”), the daughter of Shēlōmim, in accordance with a judicial decree. We observe once more the freedom of women, and should notice that naturally there would be some other document to describe the details of the portions which are exchanged. S 15, between 409 and 405 B.C., is a debt, the creditor being Yislah b. Gadol, perhaps identical with the witness of that name in S-C J. Of greater importance is S 16 which contains the names of certain women (including one named Beryl) and men who suffered in some tumult. Apparently the women were imprisoned, the men taken, the houses entered, and the valuables seized. The remainder is perfectly legible and almost as unintelligible; but one may suspect an allusion to the troublous years during which the colony suffered at the hands of the Egyptian priests. This is supported by the names of the men which include Jedoniah b. Gemariah and Hoshea b. Nathom, the latter perhaps identical with one of the Hosheas mentioned with the former in S 4, as leading citizens of Yeb. The possibility remains, however, that the document belongs to the great revolt which attended the rise of the national king Amyrtaeus who with the help of Greek soldiers threw off the Persian yoke in the last decade of the fifth century B.C. It is conceivable that the attack upon the Jewish colony, which had so evidently enjoyed Persian patronage, and remained loyal to the overlord, formed part of the preliminary steps. At all events, it may be significant that we find no mention of “Jews,” after 407, and although there

<sup>1</sup> See Lagrange, 1912, pp. 130, 577 f.; Steuernagel, *ZDPV* (1912), p. 90.

are Jewish names, the ethnic, if any, is "Aramaean" (S 15). To the fifth year of Amyrtaeus (*ca.* 400) belongs S 37, an account of the two shekels which Menahem, an Aramaean, in the fortress of Yeb, owed the woman Seluah (his wife?), apparently as part of her dowry.

This concludes our survey of the chief Elephantine papyri, and may suffice to give a fairly objective and trustworthy outline of the life of the Jewish colony. There are the many lists—often fragmentary or scarcely intelligible—of people and of property. There are the records of official, military, and private life. Upon the legal usages much valuable light is thrown. We see something of the ordinary conditions of the people, their wealth and—as the numerous jar-handles tell us (S 82 ff.)—their wine. Of especial interest are the letters, only too often hopelessly obscure. The Aramaic equivalent of the *Grüss Gott* is a familiar feature; and it is worth remembering that the conventional phrase is found centuries earlier in one of the cuneiform letters unearthed at Taanach: "May the Gods greet thee, thy house and thy children" (*ilāni li-iš-a-lu šu-lum-ka šu-lum biti-ka mārē-ka*). Again, the Jewish writers will declare, "We are all well here" (S 10<sub>2</sub>; cf. 46 A), just as did their later Greek brothers (*διὰ παντὸς εὐχομαῖ σε ἡγιαίνειν, καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὸς ὑγιεῖ*), and as our own simple folk are supposed to "hope you're well as it leaves me at present." The general conditions were the same, *mutatis mutandis*, in other Jewish centers. This is the most important and certain conclusion we can draw. Notice, further, the elaborate character of the organization, and the careful and systematic methods upon which the Persian Empire was conducted.<sup>1</sup> Aramaic was the *lingua franca*, but the civilization, as a whole, is deeply marked with the result of the earlier influence of Babylonian-Assyrian domination. The Persians preserved the procedure they found in use, and maintained the continuity of tradition. The legal documents, in particular, afford many an example of legal methods, phrases, and terms which find their parallel in ancient Babylonia.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, these

<sup>1</sup> Upon this the discussions of Eduard Meyer should be especially consulted (above, p. 360, n. 4).

<sup>2</sup> Staerk's book (Nos. 22, 23) gives many illustrations; see also for demotic and Greek parallels, L. Blau in *Judaica, Festschrift zu Hermann Cohen* (1912), pp. 207–26.

parallels extend down into the talmudic literature, which has other examples of law that can be illustrated from old Babylonian sources; and in Palestine itself the discovery at Gezer of contract-tablets in Assyrian, of the middle of the seventh century B.C., is an indication that the same stamp of legal procedure ruled over the whole area.

We are gradually coming to recognize ever more clearly that there was a certain unity of life and thought throughout the ancient East. The features that may be called international or oriental must be set against those that really prove to be peculiar to particular peoples and areas. A great deal of attention has been paid to the "comparative" treatment of the religion, law, and other aspects of the thought of ancient Western Asia as a whole, and already the results are highly significant.<sup>1</sup> Regarding as one unit the peoples of the "Bible lands"—to employ a convenient term—we have to recognize that although there were many very important differences—e.g., between Palestine and Babylonia—yet the points of resemblance, similarity, or identity must be carefully considered, if research is to proceed upon scientific lines. This means that while the biblical student will approach his problems from the Old Testament, the more historical student will seek to place the Book in the light of our increasing knowledge of the conditions that prevailed throughout the "Bible lands."

The papyri themselves bear witness to the extent of intercourse. The fragments of the Behistun inscription of Darius (p. 350, above) would indicate that copies were sent around (cf. the "apocryphal" Esther 13:1 ff.; 16:1 f.), or at least that there were people evidently interested enough to desire a copy. The so-called "Passover papyrus" (S 6), and the correspondence between Elephantine and the priests of Jerusalem, the governor of Judah, and Sanballat, are evidence of interrelations which, to judge from the various biblical references to Egypt, were not confined to any one age. This point is of the utmost importance for its bearing upon the relationship between religion in Palestine and in Elephantine. Moreover, the jar-handles from Phoenicia indicate communications between Upper

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Meyer, *Papyrusfund*, p. 115; and see especially the writings of Hugo Winckler (in particular *Religiongeschichtlicher u. geschichtlicher Orient*, 1906).

Egypt and the Levant. Consequently we are not entitled to regard the Jewish colony as some secluded, parochial community, living a sequestered life, retaining such religious conceptions as the early founders had brought with them, and untouched by, if not ignorant of, events in the world outside.

The Elephantine papyri, like the cuneiform tablets from Nippur, reveal something of the many-sidedness of Jewish life in exile (cf. also Jer. 29:5 ff.). The "exile" (*gôlâh*) was more tolerable than "captivity" (*shêbî*). Jews could do business and acquire wealth and reputation. In Elephantine as in Nippur they seem to have mixed freely with other peoples. What is told of a Daniel, a Nehemiah, or a Tobit reflects cases where capable Jews gained high positions, though exiled from their native Zion. The lamentable pictures of desolate refugees represent only one aspect of the situation when the native land was under the heel of the aggressor; and it is important to bear in mind that our ideas are based step by step upon just such evidence as happens to come under our eye. It will be observed, too, that the legal documents represent only a part of the literary activity. How imperfect would be our conception of the Jews of Yeb had we only the Sayce-Cowley papyri! The addition to our knowledge made by the series edited by Sachau is quietly suggestive of the danger, elsewhere, of basing sweeping judgments upon any small or one-sided body of evidence. Every piece of evidence has its implications; the problem is to determine them without exaggeration.

Of the ordinary literary documents the fragments of the story of the wise Ahikar take the premier position. They are a unique example of old Aramaic narrative, and illustrate the speed with which history becomes romance. Written in the first person, the narrative is a good specimen of quasi-autobiographical literature; but of no independent value as a historical source, in spite of its irreproachable names (Sennacherib and Esarhaddon).<sup>1</sup> If the introduction of Achiacharus in the Book of Tobit is to indicate that Tobit was related to this great sage, it is just conceivable that

<sup>1</sup> See Meyer, *Papyrusfund*, pp. 120 ff.; cf. also Torrey, *Ezra Studies*, pp. 244 ff. on the use of the "I" in Ezra-Nehemiah.

the story was also of traditional interest to Jedoniah.<sup>1</sup> However, the Egyptian Jews seem to have possessed other "secular" literature, some of which betrays an anti-Egyptian bias.<sup>2</sup> There may have been a distinct antiquarian interest and to this may be due the fact that we have two copies of the appeal to Bagohi. The only trifling document is S 43 which, if Lidzbarski is right, is a schoolboy's copy.<sup>3</sup>

The oldest version of the story of Ahikar is already a romance, and it differs from later versions, partly as regards material contents, and partly in the gnomic sayings. The story lent itself to elaboration, and the utterances could be altered at will. Thus, any given fragment of the story does not necessarily presuppose the complete version with which we happen to be acquainted. In textual and literary criticism it frequently happens that we find a general similarity in some particulars and a wide difference in others. Now, whenever we seek to determine the context or the implications of any piece of evidence, there is the danger of giving it a body or framework similar to that which analogous or identical evidence has elsewhere. The risks of hasty inference are well illustrated by the publication of our papyri. The Sayce-Cowley papyri in 1906 first told us of the temple of Yahu; it seemed that the building was merely an altar or shrine. Sachau's early edition of S 1-3 (in 1907) showed that we had an elaborate temple of considerable importance; but the pathetic picture of the suspended cults threw no light upon their true character. Only with the complete edition of all the papyri in 1911 did we learn of the other deities who enjoyed with Yahu the worship of the faithful. Even now it is unsafe to speculate on the precise religious ideas and conceptions that prevailed; and this, not only because of the inadequacy of the evidence, but also on account of the need of a sounder criticism of the religious psychology of the Old Testament. The

<sup>1</sup> See Nau, *Rev. bibl.*, IX, 79; D. C. Simpson, Charles's ed. of the *Apocrypha: Tobit*, pp. 191, 194. Practically all the papyri came from the same quarter of Yeb.

<sup>2</sup> The story of Ahikar appears in some parts to be anti-Egyptian; and later, of course, Jewish-Egyptian rivalry shows itself in "historical" propaganda—e.g., the stories of Manetho. Cf. perhaps *CIS*, II, 145.

<sup>3</sup> *Ephem.*, III, 245. But see Strack, *ZDMG*, LXV, 828; Schwally, *Or. Lit. Zeit.*, 1912, col. 166; Lagrange, *Rev. bibl.* (1912), pp. 136 f.

problem is that of the implications—the “psychological” context—of any piece of the evidence.

The “comparative” study of religions forbids hasty generalization. It happens, for example, that one of the finest of Babylonian hymns is addressed to Ishtar, goddess of war and of love; it is a distinctly “religious” composition, but it concludes with a characteristically “magical” charm. Ishtar is no other than the Astarte (biblical “Ashtoreth”) of Western Asia, certain aspects of whose cults are notorious. Conversely, the Old Testament proves that the worshipers of Yahweh were prone to beliefs and practices which the best minds had continuously to condemn. Thus we are not to estimate the worship of Ishtar solely by those features we repudiate, nor that of Yahweh by the more spiritual elements. We do not gain a correct picture of cults from the lips of reformers, for all reformers focus their gaze upon the blemishes and vices, and not upon any redeeming features that might be found in them. The local cults of Palestine must have had some value for their adherents, and a synthetic view of the development of Hebrew religion should deal sympathetically and critically with the point of view both of the reformers and of those to be reformed. The fact that a Yahu or a Yahweh is worshiped is no proof that the religious conceptions were precisely those which we think it only natural to associate with the names; nor should the fact that a cult contains features which we call “heathenish” blind us to the value it did have, or may have had, for the worshipers. The variations and fluctuations which the student of Hebrew religion has to investigate are analogous to the different readings, recensions, and versions or traditions which occupy the textual, literary, or historical critic. Everywhere it is necessary to co-ordinate *both* the resemblances and the differences; and the best synthesis is that which can best account for all counterarguments.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See for the “popular” religion of Israel, Meyer, *Papyrusfund*, pp. 45 ff. Jastrow, too, has observed that we must differentiate more sharply than has hitherto been done between the popular currents and the speculative, between what the people believed and the way in which the priests treated these beliefs (*Aspects of Rel. Belief in Bab. and Ass.* [1911], pp. vii f.). The fundamental principles have already been laid down by W. Robertson Smith (*Religion of the Semites*, chaps. i and ii), who especially emphasizes the *practical* relations and the *working* institutions (see

Perhaps the greatest "sensation" of the papyri was the appearance, side by side, of Yahu, <sup>2</sup>Asm-bethel, and <sup>3</sup>Anath-bethel. Bethel occurs in several compound proper names in the papyri, in the Old Testament (reading Bethel-sharezer in Zech. 7:2), and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup> It is used as a divine name, and this, as has been pointed out, at once illuminates Jer. 48:13, where Bethel stands to Israel in precisely the same relation as Chemosh to Moab. The transition from *bethel*, the object, or place, to the "numen" that abides in it is familiar. In Babylonia the great temple, *Esagila*, is deified in the name *Esagil-idinnam*, and *Ekurru*, "temple," is used in Assyrian, and more especially in Mandaean, in the plural, as a term for "demons."<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the *Asherah*, or tree-trunk, can hardly be separated from the name of the goddess Ashirat. Finally, *bethel* occurs in S 28, where an oath is to be taken by the god *Herem-bethel* (p. 352, above). It is natural to compare S 33, where an oath seems to be taken by the *Masgēdā* and by <sup>3</sup>Anath-yahu. The latter name recalls <sup>3</sup>Anath-bethel, and it has been suggested that Bethel (the god) and Yahu were sometimes regarded as identical. This, in fact, is directly confirmed by Jer. 48:13 (above). *Masgēdā*, the Arabic equivalent of which gives us our "mosque," denotes some votive stele, sacred stone, or altar, closely associated with a deity; and consequently it is possible that the oath is taken both by the sacred object, and also by the numen or deity which it represents or embodies.<sup>3</sup> But what is *Herem-bethel* (S 28)? In S 36 a witness is called *Herem-nathan b. Bethel-nathan*. Here *Herem* functions like a divine name ("H. gives"), but the interpretation must be left open: it may be the deification of the sacred precincts of a shrine, or, with Lidzbarski, we may perhaps associate the

pp. 82 f.). The standpoint of those who adhered to the local cults in Palestine may no doubt be seen in II Kings 18:22. The late persistence of idolatrous practices is evident from the Talmud; see e.g., Abodah Zarah (Elmslie's ed., p. 65). See also the present writer's *The Study of Religions* (1914), chaps. v f., on "survivals."

<sup>1</sup> See Zimmern, *KAT*<sup>3</sup>, pp. 437 f.; Sachau, Index, p. 276 (to which add S 17, l. 8, with Epstein; and *CIS*, II, 154, ll. 2 and 7, an ostrakon from Elephantine).

<sup>2</sup> See, for the latter, J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur* (1913), pp. 72 f.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Lagrange, *Études des rel. sémit.*, pp. 206 f., 209 f.; G. A. Cooke, *North-Semitic Inscriptions*, p. 238; cf. also the oath by the altar, Matt. 23:16, 18.

name with that of the South Arabian war-god H-r-m-n.<sup>1</sup> The latter is suggestive in view of the third deity, now to be considered.

The first part of ‘Anath-bethel is the name of a goddess of war who happens to have been known in Egypt many centuries previously. She is represented with helmet and arms and was often associated with Astarte. Several traces of her are found in Palestine in the shape of names: Anathoth (between Jerusalem and Bethel), the Benjaminite compound Anthoth-yah (I Chron. 8:24), Beth-anath and Beth-anoth. Anathi in S 19, col. 6, 1.8 is perhaps an abbreviation of Anath-yahu. It is not certain whether Anath may be equated with the Babylonian Anatum, the feminine of Anu, god of heaven. That she was also a goddess of heaven cannot be proved, but it is probable; in which case we must note that Yahu himself is styled “god of heaven” in S 1-3. The combination ‘Anath-yahu (S 33) is therefore not unnatural, for if Anath is a goddess of war, Yahweh in turn has the characteristics of a war-god.<sup>2</sup> The association of goddess and god in this manner is not unique. On the inscription of Mesha, king of Moab, we meet with both Chemosh and ‘Ashtar-chemosh; in Syria the familiar Atargatis is a compound of Athtar (‘Ashtar) and Atis, and in Phoenician we have, in the reverse order, Milk-ashtart, Eshmun-ashtart, and Sid-tanith. The combination points to some identity of nature or fusion of cult, and one can hardly avoid the conclusion that Yahu is here as closely associated with a female deity as is Chemosh in the Moabite example just quoted.

There remains the perplexing ‘Asm(or ‘Ashm)-bethel. The first part has been regarded (a) as an abbreviation of Eshmun; (b) as the Babylonian fire-god Ishum, who reappears in two compound names in S 26; or (c) as the equivalent of *Shēm*, “name.” Very attractive is (d) the suggestion connecting it with Ashima of Hamath (II Kings 17:30; the LXX points to a feminine Ashimath). This deity (a goddess?) has also been “discovered” in Amos 8:14, by reading: “they that swear by the Ashima of Samaria and say, by

<sup>1</sup> See *Ephem.*, III, 248 f.

<sup>2</sup> Lagrange reports that Clermont-Ganneau found fragments inscribed with יְהוָה שָׁבָתָה; the latter corresponds to Yahweh Šebā'ōth, “Yahweh of the (war) hosts” (*Rev. bibl.*, 1908, p. 261, n. 2).

the life of thy god, O Dan, and by the life of thy numen [*dōd*; so Winckler], O Beersheba." Two other identifications are to be noticed: one (*e*) with the Syrian Sime who is associated with Zeus (Hadad) and Hera, and as a daughter of the former; the other (*f*) equates the whole name 'Asm-bethel with the second of the triad in an inscription from North Syria to Σεμίω καὶ Συμβετύλω καὶ Δέοντι θεοῖς πατρώοις. A decisive explanation seems impossible, and although the Samaritan Ashima is perhaps the best the triads are very suggestive.<sup>1</sup>

Elephantine was the seat of the cult of Khnum. Names with this element appear among the colonists. Pa-Khnum occurs twice (as father of Hanan and as son of Zakkur), and Peṭe-khnum also twice (as father of Hoshea and as son of Ḥuri, S-C B, S 22). We have already seen that a priest of Khnum dwelt hard by the temple (S-C E), and the only certain instance of intermarriage between Jew and Egyptian was hardly unique (S-C G). In view of the conditions, we are entitled to assume some adjustment of religious beliefs, some interchange of religious ideas. Consequently it is significant that Elephantine had a famous triad: Khnum, lord of the cataract, Sati, mistress of Elephantine, and Ānūkt, a sister-goddess. They are mentioned together in Egyptian inscriptions as early as Sesostris I and as late as Apries. A Greek inscription names six great gods; the second triad is very secondary, but the first place is assigned to χρούθει τῷ καὶ Ἀμμωνι, Σάτει τῇ καὶ Ἡρᾳ, Ἀνούκῃ τῇ καὶ Ἔστιᾳ.<sup>2</sup> Sati and Anuki are thus identified with Hera and Hestia respectively—with the wife of Zeus and with the fire- or hearth-goddess. Sati, the "mistress," was a goddess of fertility (cf. Astarte), sometimes represented with bow and arrows; Anuki

<sup>1</sup> See Dussaud, *Rev. de l'hist. des rel.*, LXIV, 349; Lidzbarski, III, 247, 260–65; Grimme, *Orient. Lit.-Zeit.*, 1912, cols. 14 f.; and especially König, *ZATW*, 1914, pp. 16–30. Offord equates Bethel, Anath, and Ashima with the Syrian Hadad, Atargatis, and Sime (*Pal. Explor. Fund, Quart. Stat.*, 1915, April and July).

<sup>2</sup> See Breasted, *Records*, I, §§ 500, 644, 646, 650; II, 794, note; IV, 991; and *CIG*, III, 4893. When Herodotus says that Hera and Hestia were unknown (ii. 50) he may not have been aware of the identification, or it may be later than his time. The relation between the three is illustrated by the very late text referring to a king: "he was a son of Khnum, born of Sati, nursed by Ānūki"; see Wiedemann, *Rel. of the Anc. Egyptians*, pp. 13 f.

wears a foreign headdress of a cap fringed with feathers. It is possible that the Jewish triad arose under the influence of the Egyptian; and while Yahu would correspond to Khnum, the sister-goddesses of the Egyptians would be balanced by the *Bethel* compounds, and of these Anath is certainly female and 'Asm (?Ashima or Sime) possibly so. Moreover, Anath as goddess of war bears some resemblance to Sati, who, as "mistress of Elephantine," stands to Khnum in much the same relation as Anath to Yahu.<sup>1</sup> The problem obviously offers scope for almost unlimited speculation, and one must be content merely to emphasize the two triads. It must be remembered that Khnum was more than a mere local god; he was also "fashioner of gods and of men," and when we throw ourselves back to Elephantine in the fifth century B.C. the question of *my* Khnum and *your* Yahu would naturally interest the Egyptian and the Jew. It is inherently probable that there would be syncretistic tendencies, but in the absence of explicit evidence it would be unwise in this article to go beyond our data.

The really serious problem is the apparently obvious polytheism of the Jewish colony. We might venture to speak of a small pantheon! It is evident that in ordinary speech and solemn oath the Jews were not averse to the use of the divine name (S-C B<sub>4</sub>, E<sub>14</sub>, J<sub>6</sub>). The formula "May God (or the gods) greet . . . ." may be conventional, and it is disputed whether the subject is singular or plural. Jeremiah's references to the cult of the "queen of heaven" and to the general idolatrous behavior of Jews in Egypt are, however, quite unambiguous. Jampel frankly points out that mediaeval Judaism had its secondary beings or "substances," and that modern oriental and Russian Jews are ready to resort to magic; why then should not the Jewish women have resorted to the "queen of heaven"?<sup>2</sup> That the religious conditions in Palestine itself, even after the exile, were unsatisfactory from a strictly monotheistic point of view is proved by such passages as Isa. 57:3 ff.; 65:4 f.; 66:17. It is not to be expected, therefore, that in Yeb the situation was better. The efforts made to maintain the monotheism of these

<sup>1</sup> If Anuki was identified with Hestia, may one associate Asm with Ishum, the fire-god?

<sup>2</sup> MGWJ, LV (1911), 662 f., 665.

Jews have not been happy, and we may quote Father Lagrange's shrewd question: "Ne serait-ce pas en quelque manière taxer d'exagération Jérémie et Ezéchiel?" Persian influence is also to be anticipated; and there may be a reference in S 10<sub>6</sub> to a *Mazdayaçna*, a devotee of Ahurāmazda. The choice of the title "god of heaven" may be suggested by Persian use;<sup>1</sup> and the words "by the shadow of the god of heaven" (S 11<sub>5</sub>) at once recall the phrase "by the shadow of Ahuramazd," which, by the way, often recurs in the Behistun fragments (S 65<sub>5</sub>, 1<sub>3</sub>, etc.). At the other end of the scale we may place the rude objects disclosed by excavation and indicative of crude and popular ideas of the mother-goddess, etc.<sup>2</sup> The whole body of evidence, with the mingling of Jewish and non-Jewish names, furnishes a vivid picture of the general religious conditions; yet the religion is outwardly henotheistic: to "Yahu, god of heaven" the temple belongs, and he alone is mentioned at the head of the great list (S 19) which names his two associates.

The antiquity of the colony at Elephantine cannot be determined with any certainty. The outstanding fact is the claim that the temple of Yahu was established before the time of Cambyses (S 11<sub>3</sub>, 3<sub>5</sub>; cf. 72<sub>1</sub>), i.e., before 529 B.C. Naturally there was always some sort of intercourse between Egypt and Western Asia. In the seventh century B.C. Assyrian conquerors had established their garrisons in the land of the Nile. It has been argued that the general character of the cult points to a time before the Deuteronomistic reformation ascribed to Josiah (II Kings, chaps. 22 f.). But this argument has little value when we consider conditions in Palestine itself even after Josiah's reign. The time of Psammetichus II has found strong support. In his fourth year he invaded Palestine (*ca.* 590 B.C.), the Letter of Aristeas (§§ 12 f.) mentions Jewish soldiers dispatched to Egypt to help him in his campaign against Ethiopia, and graffiti at Abu Simbel (Ipsambul) bear witness to the presence of Phoenician, Greek, and Carian mercenaries.<sup>3</sup> Elephantine was the frontier city, and later, in the reign of Apries, we hear of a military revolt in which were involved Palestinians, Greeks, Syrians ('Amu, Hanebu, Satiu), and others. Moreover,

<sup>1</sup> See Lidzbarski, *Eph.*, I, 250 f.; III, 246.      <sup>2</sup> *Zeit. f. aeg. Spr.*, XLVI, 30 ff.

<sup>3</sup> The references can hardly be to Ps. 1; see Alt, *ZATW*, 1910, pp. 288 ff., 296.

the references in Jeremiah (chaps. 42–44; 46:14) attest the presence of Jews in Upper and Lower Egypt, and the mere fact that this is known is instructive, because we must not suppose that the colony, whenever inaugurated, was quite cut off from Palestine. And not only was it known that there were Jews in Egypt, but it is quite possible that Elephantine received additions during the Persian period (see Aristaeas, § 35).

An examination of the names of the Jews shows a definite absence of any Phoenician type—exception being made of the jug-inscriptions.<sup>1</sup> They include several divine names of a type that is markedly Babylonian, Assyrian, or Mesopotamian, e.g., Nusku, Hadad, and Nebo. Strangely enough there is no clear case of a name with the ambiguous prefix *El-* (God). Most characteristic is the ending *-iah* (*-yah*), which has abundant analogies in the exilic and post-exilic lists in Ezra-Nehemiah and Chronicles.<sup>2</sup> The general intermixture of names resembles that among the Jews at Nippur, where, as has been observed, the names are of the time of Artaxerxes I and Darius II; relatively few are earlier, and the new names have ideas which appear to be suggested by the exile.<sup>3</sup> Later, at Memphis, Greek inscriptions point to the presence of a definitely Idumaeaean circle; here at Elephantine the names are distinctively exilic and post-exilic rather than pre-exilic, a fact which supports the view that the colony, whenever founded, may have received additions from time to time.

It is very generally held that the colony was Israelite rather than Judaean, Samaritan (with perhaps recruits from Babylonia) rather than Jewish.<sup>4</sup> The theory may be influenced by the con-

<sup>1</sup> The readings S 82–80 are to be corrected after Dussaud, *Rev. de l'hist. des rel.*, LXIV, 352 f., and, more especially, Lidzbarski, *Abhandl.* of the Berlin Academy, 1912.

<sup>2</sup> See G. B. Gray, *Proc. of Soc. of Bibl. Archaeol.*, 1903, pp. 262 f., and, on the similar names on Jewish seals, cf. S. A. Cook, *ibid.*, 1904, pp. 109–12, 164–67, with *Pal. Explor. Fund, Quart. Stat.*, 1909, p. 290 (the names), 291 (seals), 305 f. (epigraphical data). The evidence takes us to the Persian rather than to the preceding period.

<sup>3</sup> S. Daiches: "The Jews in Babylonia in the Time of Ezra and Nehemiah according to Babylonian inscriptions," *Publication No. 2* of the Jews' College, London, 1910, pp. 8, 12 ff., 27 f.

<sup>4</sup> See, e.g., Lévi, *op. cit.*, LIV, 38; LXIII, 182 f.; Grimme, *Orient. Lit. Zeit.*, 1912, cols. 11 ff.; Van Gelderen, *ibid.*, 337; Nau, *Rev. bibl.*, 1912, p. 74; Lagrange, *ibid.*, p. 587. It would be unsafe to rely upon "Jedoniah, the Geshurite" (*CIS*, II, 138A, l. 3), of Elephantine (? the Aramaean or the Philistine Geshur).

viction that Judaean religion would be purer, by the type of such names as Bethel, Menahem, Meshullam, etc., and perhaps also by the frequent use of the term "Aramaean." On the other hand, there is no decisive reason for supposing that the colony was *not* Judaean, or that Judaean religion was necessarily more spiritual. At all events, there is nothing to prove that these Jews were cut off from the outside world, or that they were unaware, say, of the sweeping changes ascribed to Josiah. It is most improbable that Elephantine, with its copy of the inscription of Darius at Behistun, was ignorant of Palestinian affairs; and the mere fact that the priests of Yeb wrote to the high priest of Jerusalem is a pretty clear sign that relations of some sort had been maintained between Jerusalem and Elephantine. If Elephantine was not ignorant of events in Jerusalem, the alternative view is that it did not consider itself bound by them. Even in Palestine there was always need for compromise between strict orthodoxy, on the one hand, and popular belief and custom on the other, between reforming ideals and the body of thought to be reformed. The very first book of the Old Testament retains, side by side, post-exilic "priestly" sources (P) with the earlier popular material (JE), a striking example of the compromise between different levels of thought. It was left for the Book of Jubilees to rewrite Genesis and omit the cruder features, but it is Genesis, with its mixture of "higher" and "lower," of the more spiritual and the less spiritual, which survived, because it always touched the heart. And it is Genesis which still preserves *in writing* the clearest recollection that the *măssebah*, or sacred stone of Bethel, was primarily regarded as the seat of a supernatural presence or influence (Gen. 28:18 ff.). Only later was it looked upon as a harmless symbol or memorial. But it is significant that the later hand did not expunge the tell-tale evidence. Consequently the cruder ideas—which must not be reinterpreted and confused with the more spiritual developments connect themselves with the data at Elephantine. Thus the Bethel-stone recalls the *Mas-gēdā*, the stele or altar, which is joined with Anath-Yahu in the oath, S 33 (p. 353, above). Elsewhere in the Old Testament popular or less spiritual ideas are modified, adjusted, or even excised; and the lengthy and now rather obscure story of the trans-Jordanic

altar ‘ēd in Josh., chap. 22, shows how the attempt was made to accentuate the unity of worship as having existed from the first. Space forbids more than a general statement that a closer study of the Old Testament reveals abundant evidence for the existence of religious beliefs and customs which were contrary to the stricter monotheistic ideas, and which were reshaped or eradicated as occasion offered. There were fights for the recognition of Yahweh, for his supremacy over other gods, for the annihilation of other gods, for the unitary character of Yahweh as against tendencies to poly-Yahwism—to identifying him with the local Baals. Not without reason does the Shema<sup>c</sup> insist: “Yahweh, Our God, is One Yahweh.” There were the higher and the lower conceptions of deity, and, not least of all, there were the rivalries between religious centers, or between religious bodies; and of all the rivalries one of the latest and most significant appears to have been that between Jerusalem and Bethel.<sup>1</sup>

Naturally the papyri are read in the light of the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah; and conversely. After the destruction of their temple (411-410), the Jews of Elephantine appealed to Bagohi, governor of Judah, and to Delaiah and Shelemiah, sons of Sanballat (S 1 and 2).<sup>2</sup> Bagohi and Delaiah are named in S 3, where permission is given to rebuild the temple and to offer the meal and frankincense offerings. But the omission of burnt-offerings is perplexing. Was the hostility of the Egyptian priests aroused by the Jewish sacrifices—the ram was the animal of Khnum; or did Persian Zoroastrianism find the sacrifices objectionable? Considering the years that had passed since the temple was founded, both views seem improbable. The disaster occurred in Tammuz, the fourth month, long after the Passover; and it was no sudden outbreak. The Jews had laid claim to the special favor of Cambyses; and the disaster is part of a revolt against the Persian rule, when, during the absence of Arsham, Widarnag had been bought over. Whether or no the events are to be connected with the first steps in the rise

<sup>1</sup> See especially R. H. Kennett in *Cambridge Biblical Essays*, ed. Swete, pp. 101 ff., and *Jour. Theol. Studies*, January, 1905, pp. 166 ff.

<sup>2</sup> Both the LXX and Josephus (Sanballat) agree with the papyri in recognizing a vowel after the *n* (the Assyrian form would be Sin-uballit, “Sin gives life”).

of Amyrtaeus who freed Egypt from Persia, the Jews seem to have suffered as the protégés of Persia and not merely because they were Jews.

Now, with the loss of the temple a new situation was created. A drastic innovation may be injudicious, but when the old order is destroyed one can attempt what one had not previously dared. Compilers and editors have adjusted or modified material that contained objectionable features; they have also tried to rewrite it, or they have excised or ignored it. In like manner, if for any reason the cult of Elephantine was suspect, it was for those who objected to it to adjust or reform it or to suppress it—if they could. The disaster now afforded a new and better opportunity. It is highly significant, therefore, that the Jews complain that they had previously written to “our lord” (i.e., Bagohi), to the priests of Jerusalem, and to the Judaean nobles, and had received no reply. They had evidently written in all innocence. Perhaps the silence was a reply. Did Jerusalem seize the opportunity to show its enmity to the cult at Yeb? Has rivalry with Bethel any bearing upon the silence? Perhaps the so-called “Passover papyrus” (S 6, see p. 357) points to an attempt to institute some reform; and Hananiah (perhaps the brother of Nehemiah), who now appeared in Yeb, caused trouble (see S 11) by his hostility to the cult. Some explanation must be hazarded.

Torrey (*Ezra Studies*, p. 250, note) observes that Delaiah, son of Sanballat, is also the name of one of the degraded priestly families (*Ezra* 2:60). Is it merely another coincidence that these unorthodox families include the name of Tobiah, recalling the famous Ammonite who was closely related to the Judaeans (*Neh.* 6:17 f.; 13:4 ff.)? Moreover, Sanballat’s daughter had been married into the high priest’s family (*Neh.* 13:28). A period of very close interrelationship between Judah and Samaria was followed by one of hostility, and the exclusivism associated with the names of Nehemiah and Ezra is a new phase in the period—culminating in the Samaritan schism. The question arises therefore whether the silence of Bagohi and Jerusalem on the first occasion is to be connected with the developments in Palestine; and what significance, if any, is to be attached to the fact that the

appeal to both Bagohi and the sons of Sanballat receives attention and that Bagohi and Delaiah reply. This is a problem which more than any other has aroused abundant speculation, but it comes at the end, and not at the beginning, of inquiry. It involves a preliminary criticism of the biblical sources and of all we know of Bagoses (Bagohi) from Josephus (*Ant.*, XI, 7, 1). The Persian period was peculiarly obscure even to the early historians and compilers, and every theory or explanation involves a fuller discussion of the biblical evidence than is possible in this article. Suffice it to say that Jerusalem was evidently unwilling to assist Elephantine, although the latter appealed to it, as though friendly relations had previously existed. Since the reply comes from Bagohi and Delaiah b. Sanballat, it may be that the son of the Samaritan was especially interested in the colony, perhaps because it had traditional associations with Bethel; or perhaps, too, his own relations with Jerusalem were strained, and Judaean exclusivism rankled. The plots and intrigues in Upper Egypt doubtless had their counterpart in Palestine, and the intrigues and rivalries in Jerusalem itself—illustrated in the Book of Nehemiah—are enough to suggest that the question of the rebuilding of the temple at Elephantine would be an occasion for grave searchings of hearts—if not also for questions of “measures of barley” to which S 4 obscurely refers.<sup>1</sup>

The fate of the Jewish temple is unknown; no traces of it were found in course of excavation. In taking our leave of it we must notice its general significance. The Elephantine Jews are perfectly acquainted with the Hebrew technical terms for the meal-and frankincense-offerings (*minḥah* and *lēbhōnah*),<sup>2</sup> for “congrega-

<sup>1</sup> As regards the Palestinian evidence, see my introduction to I Esdras in Charles's *Apocrypha*, I, pp. 6–14. The Elephantine papyri testify to the *sort* of documents cited in Ezra-Nehemiah, but not to those documents themselves. They prove the reality of Persian favor, but not any particular example which is dubious on other grounds. The fact that the Jews had enjoyed special privileges, not only encouraged them to hope for more, but was also enough to tempt them to exaggerate their claims. Modern criticism can logically deny only what is opposed by evidence which is believed to be sounder; and these papyri justify an attitude of cautious doubt where the biblical sources contain statements exaggerated or improbable when compared with other data.

<sup>2</sup> The same combination and sequence recur in Isa. 43:23; 66:3; Jer. 17:26; 41:5. Strange to say, the term for burnt-offering is *l-w-h* and not *olah*; cf. perhaps *alwah* for *awlāh*, “wrong” (Hos. 10:9).

tion" (*‘ēdāh*), "merit" (*sēdākah*), "civilian" (*ba‘al kiryah*), "soldier" (*ba‘al degel*), etc. The colony and cult had certainly been in closest touch with Hebrew usage; the religion is of Hebrew rather than of any non-Hebraic origin. It is noteworthy that on late jar-handles unearthed at Jericho the divine name is written Yah and Yahu (ten and three times respectively), but it is difficult to determine whether there was any essential difference between Yahu and Yahweh, whether, in fact, as some think, the latter is an artificial form based upon the former. Thus, it will be seen, everywhere the papyri bring us to the point where everything depends upon other evidence and other lines of inquiry; and this article leaves off at the place where all arguments involve particular views of the Old Testament and the "evolution" of religion generally.

But these pages may perhaps establish some conclusions which are indispensable for a proper understanding of the Old Testament. In the first place, everything goes to indicate a very general similarity of conditions of life and thought throughout Egypt and Western Asia. There are indisputable resemblances. But there are also indisputable differences—local and national—and we have to co-ordinate the characteristic and unique features of the Old Testament with the whole oriental area, with which the Book is in general harmony. Next, we must distinguish the present form of the biblical material from the contents. The fact that the Talmud contains legal matter of old Babylonian affinity or origin does not make it pre-Christian; nor is a post-exilic source proved to be pre-exilic by the antiquity of some of its contents. Again the Book of Genesis has much that is old; but once it is recognized that the book in its present form has passed through the hands of post-exilic editors and compilers, and contains post-exilic sources, then those who adhere to the modern *literary-historical* theory—the Graf-Wellhausen, the only existing theory—should work backward, comparing post-exilic and earlier sources with post-exilic and earlier historical vicissitudes. It is especially instructive that the last editors or compilers retain so much that is "popular" and "non-priestly," because the evidence (viz., JE) throws light upon contemporary popular and non-priestly ideas, and proves—what is only to be expected—that the priestly legalism of the post-exilic

age, however characteristic, did not have the whole field to itself. Thus, on the one side, are these variations of thought, while, on the other, we have such evidence as can be obtained for the vicissitudes of the fifth and earlier centuries—the Samaritan rivalry and enmity; rivalries in Judah and Bethel; changes due to the advent of Babylonian exiles; the reorganization under Zerubbabel, the exile. Here, working backward, we have notable events which in the nature of the case must have left their mark upon the thought of their time. Consequently, however important it may be to determine the earliest history, the earliest sources, and their precise extent, there is room for far more tangible and direct inquiry in the exilic and post-exilic periods.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, the papyri of Elephantine throw a most welcome light upon the conditions during a period which our biblical sources leave extraordinarily obscure. They bring home to us the very important fact that the Old Testament presents only some of the ideas that prevailed. We have to rely upon such material as has been preserved, and in the form the last compilers gave it. The standpoint of Judah and Jerusalem gains the day; we see history mainly through their spectacles. We are allowed to see the work of Nehemiah and Ezra, but the Book of Ruth survives, and it serves, among other purposes, to promote a kindly spirit between Judah and Moab—thus aiming directly against post-exilic exclusivism.<sup>2</sup> The temple of Elephantine with its deities would certainly be objectionable to strict monotheistic Judaism; but not only had it enjoyed relations with Palestine; religion in Judah itself could not always afford to throw stones. Indeed the deeper “religious criticism” of the Old Testament raises the very problem which comes to the front today: What is religion, and what is its relation to ethical, national, and other ideals, and in what does the evolution of religion culminate? Questions of this sort, though not consciously realized, have recurred again and again, and our papyri, with the Old Testament, illustrate some of the efforts to deal with the situation. If our interpretation is correct, we may strongly suspect that the

<sup>1</sup> For the bearing of this upon the South Palestinian elements in the Old Testament, see *Ency. Brit.*, 11th ed., XI, 585; XV, 387; XX, 615.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Kent, *Beginnings of Hebrew History* (1904), I, 310.

exclusive Judaism of Jerusalem at length refused to tolerate the cult at Elephantine. Yet the Jews of Palestine were never without thought for their scattered brethren, and the writer in Isa. 19:19 still thinks of the pillar at the border of Egypt, a sign and a witness for Yahweh of Hosts.<sup>1</sup> And for an example of the two conflicting tendencies—the one purely universalistic, the other distinctively Jewish, or even Zionist—what can be more striking than Mal. 1:11, on the one side, and Isa. 49:12 on the other? “From East to West my name is great among the nations, and in every place incense is offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name is great among the nations, saith Yahweh of Hosts.” Against this remarkable passage set the more characteristic nationalistic feeling—“these shall come from afar, and lo, these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Syene.”<sup>2</sup> The restoration of the people is to be complete, and with it would be those who lived far away in Upper Egypt in the border-city on the confines of Ethiopia.

<sup>1</sup> The *massebah* is regarded as legitimate by treating it merely as a memorial; cf. the treatment of the stone in Gen., chap. 28, and of the altar *ed.* in Josh., chap. 22.

<sup>2</sup> “The Land of Sinim” often supposed to be China should be read as above (so Michaelis, in the first instance; both Targ. and Vulg. rightly placed the name in the south).